

MANUAL: FOM 801, Health Services for Foster Children	JOB AID Children's Foster Care
SUBJECT: DHS-1147, Foster Care Youth Health Services Refusal (ages 18 and older)	05/2014 New Issue
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Overview

Initial and yearly medical and dental exams are required for older foster care youth (ages 18 and older). However, at age 18, health care decision-making legally becomes the responsibility of the youth. Providing youth with the information necessary to make responsible decisions regarding health care needs, services and treatment requires engaging the youth in discussion on all aspects of this topic. This process will assist youth in making current informed decisions and lay the groundwork for the youth's future medical, dental and mental health care choices. The DHS MiTEAM Office provides tips and guidance for caseworkers to engage, support and mentor youth on health care issues on the next page.

DHS-1147, Foster Care Youth Services Refusal

Despite best efforts from the caseworker and the youth's support team, youth ages 18 and older may still refuse to attend medical and dental exams. If a youth age 18 or older refuses to participate in medical and dental exams, a DHS-1147, Foster Care Youth Services Refusal form must be completed.

The DHS-1147 is not intended as a general checklist of health care information passed on to the youth. It is a vehicle to initiate a collaborative process between caseworker and youth, allowing full youth involvement while offering information and practical experience designed to assist youth in developing the skills needed for self-care and responsible decision-making.

The DHS-1147 is documentation of the worker's efforts and assurances that the youth was engaged in discussion on the importance of identifying and attending to health care needs, providing information on services and treatment available and guidance in accessing medical, dental and mental health services.

NOTE: Youth signature on DHS-1147, documentation of the youth's refusal to participate in the required medical/dental exams does not equate to or provide compliance in health care requirements (i.e. the DHS-1147 is not a substitute for the required medical and dental exam documentation). The form signatures document the worker's efforts to provide health care access and services information to meet the youth's health needs.

Caseworker Tips and Guidance from the DHS MiTEAM Office

Mentoring:

Due to a lack of family and advocates in the life of older foster youth, caseworkers must act as a mentor and assist youth as they transition to adulthood. As a mentor, it is imperative that caseworkers coach youth in addressing their healthcare needs and connect this to how it will lead to improved self-care.

Additionally, the caseworker should demonstrate persistence and convey the importance of initiating and following through with addressing healthcare needs. If caseworkers demonstrate that this is an issue of little importance, the youth will adopt this attitude.

Engagement:

Youth may have many reasons to refuse to address their health care needs. These reasons can include overall indifference, embarrassment, fear of the required procedure, or fear of their new independence. A worker should engage the youth in an upfront and honest discussion as to the reasons for refusal. Once these reasons are identified, work to address the barriers with the youth and his/her identified team.

If a youth continues to refuse, the caseworker should continuously encourage the youth to be proactive about his/her health care needs. Discussion with the youth may include a dialogue as to the data and consequences of not acquiring appropriate healthcare.

In an effort to mentor and coach youth through this process:

- Talk to youth about their preferences.
- Incorporate their opinions and suggestions about their healthcare needs.
- Provide them with expectations and hold them accountable as they plan to address these needs.

Teaming:

Create a team around the youth. Identify the supports that may assist the youth in acquiring appropriate healthcare and include this information in the youth's transition plan.